



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee

March 7, 2016

**Commissioner Raul Pino, M.D., M.P.H.
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House Bill #5538 - An Act Concerning the Scope of Practice for Anesthesiologists

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has concerns with House Bill #5538, An Act Concerning the Scope of Practice for Anesthesiologists, as currently written. The Department is concerned because the language in this bill would allow an anesthesiologist to administer anesthesia in a dental setting without the existing patient safety mechanisms that are inherent in the current anesthesia permit statute.

The Department is not opposed to the concept of a licensed and board certified anesthesiologist administering anesthesia in a dental setting. However, the Department feels that this proposed bill as currently written eliminates a number of the patient safety mechanisms that are inherent in the current anesthesia permit statute. DPH does not support the revisions without equivalent safety measures being in place.

The current anesthesia permit regulations under Section 20-123b(6) and (9) mandate specific requirements for staffing, equipment and drugs for safe anesthesia delivery, and maintenance and emergency management of a patient receiving anesthesia. Section (d) in subsection (3) of this bill would eliminate the need for a permit if the anesthesia is being administered by an anesthesiologist. Additionally, the bill fails to provide a standard for equipment, trained personnel and management of emergencies. At present, there are no licensed facilities in which an anesthesiologist currently works that are not required to have trained personnel, equipment and procedures to manage emergencies.

The bill also fails to acknowledge CGS Section 19a-493b, which exempts licensed dentists from obtaining an ambulatory surgical facility license if they are administering anesthesia under an anesthesia permit pursuant to Section 20-123b and 20-126l(d). The proposed bill contains no language that would allow a dentist to hire an anesthesiologist and remain exempt from having an ambulatory surgical facility license.

The Department is also concerned that subsection (a) in Section 3 of this bill could be interpreted to prohibit a dentist who does not currently have an anesthesia permit from obtaining a permit after the date of the adopted regulations. The Department is unaware of any rationale for this prohibition and sees no need for it.

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Since DPH is not opposed to the concept of an anesthesiologist providing services in a dental setting, the Department would be glad to work further on this language with the proponents of the bill and the Public Health Committee to ensure that appropriate patient safety mechanisms are in place and that in the future dentists will still be permitted to administer anesthesia when treating patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information.